The Seed Sower.

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The Daughter.

My little daughter grows apace;
Her dolls are now quite out of date;
It seems that I must take her place,
We have become such friends of late,
We might be ministers of state,
Discussing projects of great peril,
Such strange new questionings dilate
The beauty of my little girl.

How tall she grows! What subtle grace
Doth every movement animate;
With garments gathered for the race
She stands, a goddess slim and straight.
Young Artemis, when *she* was eight
Among the myrtle-bloom and laurel—
I doubt if she could more than mate
The beauty of my little girl.

The baby passes from her face,
Leaving the lines more delicate,
Till in her features I can trace
Her mother's smile, serene, sedate.
'Tis something at the hands of fate,
To watch the onward years unfurl
Each line which goes to consecrate
The beauty of my little girl.

ENVOY.

Lord! hear me, as in prayer I wait.
Thou givest all; guard Thou my pearl;
And, when Thou countest at the Gate
Thy jewels, count my little girl.

J. B. S.

Aimless Living.

A SERMON BY THE LATE REV. G. W. CONDER.

As a man's aim is, so will his life be. Every existence has its own true and proper goal, and its own natural course of development towards that goal. The plant that unfolds itself from a little noteless germ into a thing of beauty and fragrance, reaches continually up from the first moment of its germination to the hour when it shall spread its perfect beauty to the sky; it fulfils its course.

The little insect that sports its little life out in a day, and seems to have no other end of his existence but that little day of sunny pastime, fulfils its course; lies his appointed time a dormant germ without a sign of life; then crawls his little infancy among the grass roots and the clods; then bursts forth suddenly into beauteous life, and lends the world his charms his little hour; and then, is either taken up into some higher life or dies and leaves behind him a thousand germs of similar beauty in his place.

In the realm of Nature all things fulfil their course, they never swerve from their appointed end; their progress may be arrested at any stage of it, but it cannot be turned aside: the end itself cannot be altered nor changed. It cannot be tempted towards anything higher than its own true issue and perfection: it cannot be

warped or corrupted into anything lower. Unhindered, it will fulfil its own proper course and no other, and nothing but some untoward accident can prevent that fulfilment. Nature neither sins nor fails.

But the moment we begin to speak of man how different must be our language. Can it be said of the world of men as a whole—of humanity—that it fulfils its course? There is a heavenly calling for every man, and a true and natural course of development for his life, measured in its every stage by Divine wisdom and love. But does every man pursue this course, and reach this end? Does it look like a heaven-ordained thing, this little history of seventy years of mingled pleasure and pain, with death to round it all into a whole? The man *not* doing what even the insects do, reaching up into some higher life:—not even what the plants do, lending the world the use or beauty of his life.

If man be what all confess him to be, the noblest fact of creation, its crown and head, the being up to whom all others reach, and for whom all other earthly lives are lived, into whose being they all fit, and around whom they all group themselves as their natural centre, then surely we may expect the true end and issue of his life to be as much greater than theirs as his life itself is greater, and the fulfilment of his course may be expected to be, and ought to be, by far the greatest and most glorious thing under the sun. But is it so in all, or even in the majority of cases? Is it not rather the truth that the life of a vast multitude of men about us here in Christian England, is just the opposite of all this? And that it is only the few who do fulfil the true course, and reach the true end of man?

What, then, can be the cause of so sad and singular a phenomenon? I do not pretend here to give a full answer to this question, but only to point out one part of this manifold cause; the one that is hinted at in the title and first sentence of this paper, Living without an aim.

There is not much need to define what we mean by this sentence. It is the living without any thought of the great end in which existence should culminate, and without any conscious definite end at which a man aims in all that he does. A life which is as a circle without a centre; a ship without chart or rudder; a voyage to anywhere, as circumstances may determine; on to nowhere; a ceaseless drifting hither and thither at the mercy of the currents and the winds. There are many such lives. To how many might you go up any day and completely puzzle them by asking them the simplest of all questions—Friend, what are you living for? What answer could they make, if they spoke truly, but this—"Why, I suppose I am living to live." Life is its own end with them. They live because they must; and they try to make that necessity as agreeable as they may.

There are many who (whether happily or unhappily for themselves, I will not undertake to say) are under no necessity to choose any specific calling, or profession, or work. They are Fortune's favourites, and may lie and be dangled in her lap all their lives, if they so list. They are free to choose amid all human things for an aim, an end, a calling, a mark, a prize, but they have never dreamed of such a thing. To them the highest of all aims is splendidly possible if they could but desire it. But no! they linger, wander, saunter through existence, dreaming, and singing, and sighing their lives away; now and then thinking what a splendid thing it is to live and be happy, and sometimes what a wretched thing it is to have to live and be so miserable; but weaving no fabric, leaving no life-track, building neither mansion nor monument, daily writing their little names on the sand, to be daily washed away; blessing none and blessed by none, travesties of humanity and puppets of life.

Spite of the outward gaiety and beauty of many of these lives, the sight of them is one of the saddest things I know. Within them, as within all, are slumbering all the glorious human faculties and powers; around them, appealing to them, as to all, is the great Divine universe, with its infinity of splendid employ; within reach of their arm, and hand, and heart, and brain is the great human world, with its huge manifold sorrow, its darkness, its poverty, its helplessness, its sin; its children by myriads asking for the light and the loving teacher; its women by thousands, over-tasked and under-strengthened, crying out for sisterly, charitable help; and yet these favourites of Fortune, whose life wants nothing but an aim, a worthy end

and guiding purpose to make it the greatest and loveliest thing in the world, can find nothing to live for but their own selfish pleasure and delight.

Now that, to me, is the lowest of all lives. I care not where you find it; how high up on the social tiers; how lovely its exterior, or how accomplished and fitted to charm; from what fountain of manly force or womanly grace that life flows, it is, in truth, a low, base, mean thing; it is doing what the sot does, only in a more refined way; it is on the same level with all sorts of sensual and sordid living; it has no higher end than these, and therefore is as base as they.

But this "aimless living" is by no means confined to the class of people who have no necessity to find anything to do. There are vast multitudes of very busy folk who are just as much living aimless lives. The *mode* of their existence is just as much an accident or a necessity with them as the *fact*. They did not will their own existence, and they did not choose its course. They drifted into the best thing they could find to make a living by, and that is what they are living for, "to make a living." They live to live, and that is all. They never think of anything into which life is to resolve itself, to issue, to find its culmination and completion by and by—it is a thing to be got through somehow, it is to be hoped pleasantly, if not, to be endured, and then to end, and then! Well, as that is not a pleasant thing to think of, they defer it till it must be thought of, when, mostly, it is quite too late to think of it with any result.

And this, too, is a wholly ignoble way of living for a *man*. I care not how busy a man may be in life, not what the quality of the things he handles, be he mechanic or mathematician, bricksetter or banker, artist, poet, lawyer, statesman, if he be just merely following "a bent," and living to live. It is still a prostitution of noble faculties to mean ends, and is therefore what I said the other was, a low, and a base, and a pitiable thing.

As a man's aim is, so will his life be. I would fain suggest the immense importance of the duty of reflecting upon the purpose of existence, and what its issue may be. Cease to drift and begin to live. Go shut yourself up in yourself, and meditate, reflect, force yourself to think upon this great matter; question your mind and heart, if constraint be needful, to listen to what the truth will come and silently say to you—"Why am I here, in the midst of God's universe, with these powers? And what will come of it?"

Let these words of one of our most original thinkers and writers help you:—"Here we are on a little spinning, askew-axised thing we call a planet. A round, rough, rusty, little metallic ball, very hard to live upon, most of it much too hot or too cold; a couple of narrow, habitable belts about it. . . . . Explosive gases seemingly inside it, and possibility of very sudden dispersion. This is where we are. And round about us seem to be other such balls, variously heated and chilled, ringed and mooned, moved and comforted; all the giddy group of us forming an atom in a milky mist, itself another atom in a shoreless phosphorescent sea of such animalcules. Whereupon, I presume, one would first ask, 'Have we any chance of getting off this ball of ours and getting on to one of these finer ones?' . . . . And even on this rusty, mouldy earth, there appears to be things which may be seen with pleasure, and things which might be done to great advantage. The stones of it have strange shapes; the plants and the beasts of it have strange ways; its air may be coined into wonderful sounds, its light into manifold colours. . . . . One would like to know something of all this, I suppose: to divide one's score of a thousand hours as shrewdly as might be. . . . . And if there should be fighting to do also, and weeping, and much burying, truly, we had better make haste."*

Aye, and there is much more and higher work than all this to be done in life. There is a prize to be won worth the winning—worth all effort and all sacrifice that it may demand for its winning. There is a harvest to be reaped, worth all that the seed-time may cost, even though we sow it all "in tears." There is a crown to be fought for, worth a life-long strife. There is an inheritance to be possessed worth the exchange, if we must give the whole world to get it. There is a rest to be enjoyed worth

* "The Cestus of Aglain," by John Ruskin. *Art Journal*, May, 1865.

a long, long day of hot and never-failing toil. And there are fallen brothers and fainting sisters to be ministered unto, and wild, wandering little children to be gathered in and tended, and more wildly wandering men and women to be recovered, and regenerated, and humanised, and pits of danger to be covered in, and lighthouses built on hidden rocks of death, and a devil to fight off God's Paradise, and man's manifold wrongs to be turned into rights, and statute-books to be written anew, and loaves to be broken into starving mouths, and pestilences to be warned off from great cities, and a Temple to build, whose floor must be laid in all the lands, and whose topstone the angels must bring. Who needs then, and who *can*, without nameless shame and guilt, lead an aimless life?

Preachers and Preaching.

BY THE TATE LECTURER.

II.

DAWSON AND DALE.

We have noticed two strong features of likeness in the preaching of Dawson and Dale, their originality—although it was originality with a difference—and their passion for conduct. It may be even more profitable to notice some fundamental differences in the preaching of these famous men; not, indeed, their theological differences, which were profound enough, but the differences in their methods of preaching religious truth.

Dawson's method was that of the artistic imagination, Dale's that of the speculative intellect. Dawson had not much philosophy, not more than could be put into a pill box, and Dale had little affinity with the metaphysicians. They were both intensely practical, but one was dominated by the force of logical argument, and the other by the vast spectacle, the many-coloured, ever-shifting spectacle of human life. The one was a dogmatist and scientific theologian, the other a poet and a seer.

In an article on Dawson, which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, Dale wrote:—"With large numbers of thoughtful men, the demands of the speculative intellect are imperative. It is not enough that isolated moral and spiritual facts are known to be real, and that isolated moral and spiritual laws are known to be authoritative. The intellect is restless and dissatisfied until these facts and laws are organised into a theological system." He adds:—

I am not sure that Mr. Dawson was able to sympathise with this craving for a theological system. I think he disparaged the functions of the intellect in relation to religious truth. His genius was not scientific. In the spiritual universe he was content to wonder at the glory of the stars without speculating on the laws which determine their real or apparent motions. To him it was enough that flowers were beautiful: he was conscious, of no imperious necessity compelling him to enquire into the laws of their structure and growth. His intellect was critical rather than systematic, and he was still greater as an artist than as a critic. In dealing with any moral and religious truth, it was not his way to give you a map of the country, such as a lieutenant in the Ordnance Department would produce, or a measurement of the ground such as a surveyor would give you, or a plan of the building such as would be prepared in an architect's office; he sat down with his canvas and colours and gave you a picture. Wonderful pictures he sometimes painted. But there are many of us who are not satisfied with pictures, however noble and beautiful. We want a map of the country over which we have to travel, a survey of the estate which we have to cultivate, and a plan of the house in which we have to live. The map, the survey, and the plan of the work of theologians, at the best they are imperfect. They have to be revised from age to age. But to those who know how to use they seem valuable, to many of us they seem indispensable.

The special characteristic of Mr. Dawson's genius to which I am now referring explains how it was that so many persons were unable to discover what he believed. They could not put the things together they heard from him. His exact creed was not apparent. The explanation is that he was an artist and a poet. We cannot get to understand the theory of sound from Shelley's "Ode to the Skylark," or the theory of colour from Wordsworth's verses about the rainbow; for theories we must plod our way through scientific treatises which are much harder to read. Nor do we get engravings of Elijah Watton's pictures if we want to learn how the roads and passes run in Switzerland: we buy a map, which is far less beautiful to look at In theology, Mr. Dawson gave his congregation the poem and the picture, not the scientific treatise of the map. When I used to hear him he was too much disposed to speak about the map and the treatise as though they were quite worthless. This is apt to be the way of artists, but the scientific intellect is not to be defeated of its rights, and the reign of theological science is not yet over.

Now Dale was exactly all that Dawson was not—a theological map-maker. He produced for your edification an elaborate theological survey; he gave the evangelicals a new or revised theological system; he brought to bear on religion a scientific intellect. He was nothing if not logical,

argumentative, analytic. His fault was quite the opposite of Dawson's; he made too much of the intellect, too much of systematised beliefs, and of accurate reasoning. In later years he became painfully aware of this defect. He writes with much humility :—

I have been thinking much and with much concern about my preaching. It has a fatal defect. It is wanting in an element which is indispensable to real success. I do not think that I should state the exact truth if I said that I was not anxious for the conversion and perfection of individual men, and cared only for setting forth the truth. But I fear that the truth occupies too large a place in my thought, and that I have been too much occupied with the instrument—the Divine instrument—for effecting the ends of the ministry, too little with the actual persons to be restored to God. This comes from a moral and spiritual condition which involves serious guilt. God forgive me! It is even now possible through the Divine grace for this sin to disappear. It lies deep. The particular result of it which I have marked is but one of its evil effects. I have again and again attempted to discover how to do my work more effectively—have honestly tried to make everything contribute to the usefulness of my preaching; but the central evil has remained; it is a want of conformity to the mind of Christ, a hardness of heart which must be subdued and melted by the grace and truth of God, if the few remaining years of my ministry—few at the most—are to have a different character from those which have gone before.

To what extent have I failed for another reason—not recognising in thought the discontent, the yearning for an unknown God, the reaching toward Christ, of many who are not decidedly Christians? I felt rather strongly toward the close of last year that in one respect among others my ministry—especially of late years—has been gravely defective. I have striven to press home upon men and to illustrate the very central contents of the Christian Gospel; but I have not recognised practically the obligation to use in preaching all those secondary powers which contribute to create and sustain intellectual and emotional interest in preaching. The more strenuous intellectual effort, in order to make truth clear and to put its strongly, has not been neglected; but there has not been the legitimate use, either in the choice of subjects or their treatment of those elements which are of a rhetorical character, and which raise the audience into a condition which is perhaps friendly to the reception of Christian truth. I have a dread of aiming at the "popular" method of treatment arising from a dread of aiming at "popularity;" but the two aims are wholly distinct, and it has been a fault not to aim at the first.

I have set myself to remedy this during the present year, and hope, with God's help, to succeed.

In connection with the same experience there is another suggestive passage :—

These conclusions are in part the result of meditation suggested by a conversation at the Church Fellowship Conference just before I left home. Mr. Mander read a paper on what could be done to contribute to the strength and efficiency of our church life. He began with the pulpit, and the conversation was very much arrested at the first page of his paper. It was urged by several that my preaching moved at a height—intellectual and spiritual—far above that of the congregation generally. The prayers, too, were also too far removed from the actual experience of the people. Hardly any of those present are able to be present at the evening service, and the criticism—which was as kindly as it was frank—was truer of the morning than of the evening services. There was specially a request for more ethical preaching, and a curious, half-suppressed antagonism to Paul. It was a very interesting talk. Notwithstanding the kindness of the dominant element of the criticism—that the sermons have an intellectual, literary, and spiritual quality which commands the sympathy and gratitude of the best and most cultivated, an opinion which it would not be easy to justify to the extent of which it was urged—it pained me at the time a great deal, and kept me awake for several hours. But I ought not to have felt the pain, and I hope to profit by the criticism. The conclusion I reached while away from home was that it was more accurate in its appreciation of defects than it seemed to me at the time, though the positive suggestions for improvement seemed, and still seem to me, wanting in discernment.

A second point of difference between the preaching of these two men is to be found in the "styles" they adopted. Dawson was always racy, homely, colloquial; he used the language with which men are familiar from their cradle, the common language of the people, the language of the home and the street, the language in which men bargain, and quarrel, and make love, and tell their griefs—the language of simple, natural feeling. His sentences were clear and crisp. If there was now and then a touch of Carlyle in them, there was much more than a touch of Cobbett. He lived through the age of Dickens, and sometimes we hear an echo of the Dickens' grotesquerie. But, after all, his style was his own, simple, free and flexible, easily passing from humour to pathos, and from pathos to fun, and from fun to burning indignation. It was not academic, but conversational, familiar, smacking of the soil. It had its faults, but nobody could deny its effectiveness. Here was a man talking *with* you rather than a man preaching *at* you. In his sermon it was a dialogue that went on, and every man in the audience felt that he himself was the other speaker. The preacher had engaged you in conversation: it was the free, easy, spontaneous talk of a man of genius, who was not thinking about "style" at all, but about popular idols, popular prejudices,

popular vices, and popular follies. It was the talk of a man who chaffed, denounced, melted into tears, burst into laughter, softened into sympathy, and all in rapid succession.

Dale's style, on the other hand, was carefully cultivated, polished, with an eye to literary form, which often made it stilted and artificial. It had no tenderness, no quiet resting places, no shadows. It was an aggressive style, brilliant, bejewelled sometimes with striking phrases, but hard as steel. It was a style attained by immense effort. Dawson's style was just the spontaneous utterance of the man; Dale's was the carefully-constructed utterance of the scholar and the man ambitious for literary excellence.

But this also he came in old age to regard as a defect—

Is it too early to record the hope that God has given to me a new element of power in my preaching? The word which has been often used to denote what critics regarded as the excellence of my preaching and speaking really suggested the qualities in which both had been defective, and the preaching more than the speaking—"stateliness." That is not the characteristic of effective preaching; and it suggests a whole set of intellectual, ethical, and spiritual elements which account for failure. I think that in the sermons of the last two Sundays the "stateliness" has disappeared, and that there has been more of brotherly access—intellectual and, if I may so put it, rhetorical access—to the people. The intellectual quality has not, I think, been inferior to what I have usually reached, but on the whole higher; but the "stateliness" has gone. In preparation I aimed at more freedom, and in preaching, God gave it me.

Dawson and Dale, widely as they differed in theology, in methods of presenting truth, and in style, show us the nobler aspects of an age of transition, the real advantage which times of doubt and hesitancy may bring to men, in calling out as it were reserve forces which in quieter times would have remained undeveloped. One in his contempt for theological science, the other in his strenuous effort to reconstruct that science on a more stable foundation, were alike children of the nineteenth century. Both saw that the object of true religion is not insurance against prospective trouble, but the life of the spirit, and both laboured mightily, although with different weapons and in different ways, to make the life of the spirit triumphant. And wisdom is justified of all her children.

Do not speak of your happiness to a man less fortunate than yourself.

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.*

Life in Oxford depends very much upon the weather. We are more at liberty than most people to choose the hours in which to do our work, and, strange as it may sound, we probably do more on the fine days than on the wet, when we are obliged to stay indoors. Even if one desired to spend the whole day studying, it would be out of the question. The climate is enervating, and it is necessary to seize the afternoon for active out-door exercise, in order that we may be fit for work in the evening. The more industrious of Oxford undergraduates, therefore, attend lectures in the morning, play in the afternoon, and avail themselves of the evening for reading. The greater part of the work, however, is done in the vacations. Let all distinguish clearly between a vacation and a holiday! The beginning of term was very rainy. Most of us could be seen in the Oxford Union Library, but who can work there on a wet afternoon? Some of the students are indeed making frantic, but unsuccessful, efforts to read seriously, others are yawning over the latest novel, while many are travelling far beyond the land of Nod—a very pretty land, we judge, from the smiles which occasionally pass over its visitors' faces, and a particularly quick way to it is an Oxford Union chair. The meadows were flooded for a fortnight at the beginning of term, and, having at last got an enthusiastic boatman at Manchester College, he was daily seen tacking across Port Meadow, enjoying the dippings of other men, and keeping his own bark straight. The weather being more favourable towards the end of term, our men took walks, cycled, and "talked shop" together, while one solitary individual enjoyed himself in a canoe. But it has been so cold that none of us have sallied forth towards the boats in Oxford style, with a silk cushion under one arm and a Japanese parasol under the other.

The portrait gallery of the college has been further increased by the addition of the following collection, which will illustrate the breadth and range of the Manchester College principles:—John Hampden, William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Milton, Alfred Tennyson, John Locke, Isaac Walton, and T. H. Huxley. These are the gift of Mr. R. D. Darbishire, the generous donor of one of the library windows, which, by the way, has been considerably improved, some of the darker panes having been removed to make room for lighter ones after the same design.

During the term two sets of Hibbert Lectures have been delivered. Rev. R. H. Charles, D.D., of Dublin University, the celebrated scholar in Apocalyptic literature, gave three on the "Eschatology of Later Judaism," which were well attended, several professors of the University being present. These were listened to with great pleasure and profit by those who had little or no knowledge on the subject, and were also thoroughly enjoyed by those who were well read in it. Mr. W. A. Shaw, M.A., also delivered three on "The Church during the Commonwealth." Some of the men connected with Ruskin Hall have begun to attend the

* Arrived too late for insertion in our April number.

lectures which are open to the public, viz., Mr. Carpenter's, on "Comparative Religion," and Mr. Wicksteed's, on "Ethics and Economics."

Mansfield.—We hope our meetings with the students of Mansfield College will be so frequent that a special head will be always reserved for reports of them. On Wednesday, March 1st, they invited us to dinner and a smoking concert. Almost all our men were able to accept, and were very heartily received. The Mansfield men provided the whole of the programme, which was tastefully printed, and detained us with song, recitation, and conversation until 10-30 p.m. They fixed the standard of entertainment rather high, but we shall do our best to respond next term. About sixty were present.

Shakespeare Society.—We have had only one meeting this term, owing to our visit to Mansfield College. The present generation, however, cannot boast enthusiasm in this ancient institution. Few of the students were present, but there was as much noise as usual—certain students, who shall be nameless, insisting on playing an extempore operetta. The play for the night was "Othello," but as this was considered somewhat depressing, it was soon resolved to indulge in song. Of course, this society exists not only for the reading of Shakespeare, but also for the cultivation of the Shakespearian spirit—especially on its comic side.

Discussion.—The 220th meeting of the society was held on Friday, February 10th. Mr. J. H. Woods, B.A., introduced the subject of British Government in India, which called forth an interesting speech from Mr. Pal, and resulted in the passing of the following resolution:—"That this House recognises the many benefits which have accrued to India from British Rule, but considers that the repeated pledges given by English statesmen to prepare India for its own self-government require that the natives of India should be more freely admitted into the Civil and Military Services, and that schemes of local self-government already in operation should be further expanded in area and developed in detail." Eight voted for this, and no one ventured to say nay.

At the next meeting Mr. Buckland moved "That this House holds that the present political position demands the formation of a new political party, which, in international affairs, shall pursue universal rather than Imperialist principles, and in Home, Colonial, and Imperial Government shall discover the line of true development not in the fulfilment of the social but of the individual ideal." This met with the fate of almost all the Manchester College Debating Society's motions, being lost by 3 to 1. The discussion was brief, and some members revealed their inability to take the subject seriously. At both meetings we were favoured with good attendances of visitors.

Martineau Club.—The eleventh meeting of the club was held on Friday, February 3rd, when one of the members, Mr. Haynes (of Balliol), read a paper on "The Political Aspect of Religious Persecutions," in which he supports with numerous examples the opinion that the motives of religious persecutions in the past have been chiefly political. At the next meeting we were favoured with a paper from the Rev. Hastings Rashdall, D.C.L., whom most will know as one of the leaders of broad thought in the University and in the Church of England, on "The Ethics of Forgiveness." Professors Percy Gardner and Ashley (of Harvard) were present, and took part in the discussion which followed. Both meetings were well attended, and the members showed more willingness to speak than formerly.

On Sunday, March 5th, an evening devotional service was held in the chapel, when the choir rendered Mr. Kerry's anthem, "Praise the Lord, O my soul," and Gounod's "The peace of God," the soloists being Mrs. Lewis, Miss Parker, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Lang Jones. The special preachers for this term have been Revs. H. E. Dowson and J. Wood. The chapel has been licensed for marriages, the first wedding being that of Mr. A. Liddon Watkins and Miss Odgers. We question whether the chapel has gained anything by this, for Miss Odgers was one of our best singers.

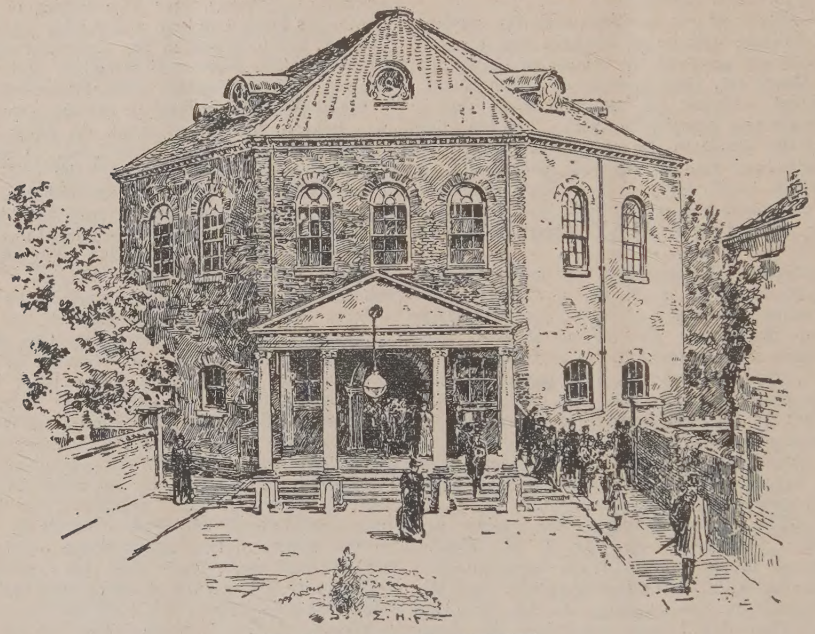
Social Union.—There have been two meetings. On the second, Mr. Kerry, our organist, gave us a very good account of a tour in Switzerland, illustrated by numerous slides. The views were exceptionally interesting, since they were not limited to the wonders of the Alps, but included many picturesque incidents connected with the life of the Swiss people and with the tour.

Papers have been read by the students on Browning and his works, at Mr. Carpenter's, on Sunday afternoons, which have provoked many lively discussions as to the merits of that poet. Some of his critics have argued with some force that his reputation for intellectuality is due to his obscurity, and that his supposed variety of thought does not excel other poets' monotony.

Charles Street Institute.—The various branches of our work down in St. Ebbe's have maintained their usual level. The Sunday evening services have been well attended. Mr. Platts, of Mansfield College, was able at the beginning of term to fulfil a long-standing and desire to conduct the service for us. Solos have been rendered at these services, chiefly by the people of the Institute. At the beginning of the year, through the generosity of Mrs. Carpenter, the children of the school paid their first visit to Manchester College. After tea, they were taken into the large lecture room, where a tremendous Christmas tree had been decorated, which caused them to open wide their eyes. All the children received presents of toys and clothing. Their faces were interesting, from a psychological point of view, clearly expressing at once the desires to go home and show their presents and to stay and gaze at the tree. After the girls had displayed their vocal and the boys their dramatic powers, they gave prolonged and ringing cheers for Mrs. Carpenter and the teachers, and then departed homewards. We have had one concert. A fret-work class of about half-a-dozen boys is being conducted by Mr. Charles Raworth. Mr. Andreae's club for working men, which was started last term, has been very successful. Ten men have joined, and the average attendance has been nine.

During the Christmas vacation, Mr. Stewart, who entered the college last October, settled at Newbury. The students have had their share of colds and other illnesses this term, which in some cases has necessitated occasional absence from lectures. A. H.

OUR ANCIENT CHAPELS.



OCTAGONAL CHAPEL, NORWICH.

The Octagon Chapel, Norwich.

"In pursuance of this King's (Charles II.) Declaration of Indulgence in 1671-2, licences under his own hand and seal were granted to those who applied for them, and it was at this time that two buildings situate in St. Andrew's Parish, and formerly parts of the Convent of the Black Friars, were licenced under the above authority, one for the Presbyterian, the other for the Independent Congregation." "This fit of tolerating was but of short duration, for in March, 1673, Charles revoked his Indulgence, by which means all the licences for meeting houses were taken away." (*History of the Octagon Chapel. John Taylor.*

"In 1687 the Presbyterians built a meeting house upon the ground over against the Black Boys, and at the same time the Independents repaired a house in St. Edmunds, formerly a brewhouse." *(Blomfield's History of Norwich).*

"In 1753 it was found necessary, from some defects in the building, to pull down the old meeting house which was built in 1687. The congregation having been called together on the 3rd October, 1753, for the purpose of taking into consideration the state of the building, it was determined that a new chapel should be erected on the site of the old one. At the same time a subscription was entered into for the purpose, to which the members of the congregation contributed £3523 11s., and persons (chiefly residents in Norwich) who were not members, £432 1s. 4d."

"The first stone of the building was laid on the 25th February, 1754, by Dr. Taylor, and in little more than two years the present spacious and elegant chapel was completed, the total cost being £5174 15s. 8d., the whole amount, with the exception of the sum above noticed, having been raised in the congregation; so that when the chapel was opened it was unencumbered by debt of any kind."

The "New Chapel in St. George's of Colgate" was opened by Dr Taylor, May 12, 1756, by a sermon from Haggai ii, 8-9, on "The glory of

any house erected for public worship, and the true principles—religious, civil, and social—of Protestant Dissenters." *(History of the Octagon Chapel).*

"Wednesday, December 23, 1757.—I was shewn Dr. Taylor's new meeting house, perhaps the most elegant one in all Europe. It is eight square, built of the finest brick, with sixteen sash-windows below, as many above, and eight sky-lights in the dome, which indeed are purely ornamental. The inside is finished in the highest taste, and is as clean as any nobleman's saloon. The Communion Table is fine mahogany, the very latches of the pew doors are polished brass. How can it be thought that the old coarse Gospel should find admission here?" *(John Wesley's Journals).*

Notes by the Way.

We have had summer schools at Oxford for theologians, doctors of divinity, professors, and other mighty folk. But we look with more interest on the experiment to be tried in July next of a summer school for much humbler people—Sunday School Teachers. We think it likely to be even of greater use than more ambitious gatherings. The Sunday School Association (Essex Hall) in connection with the professors of Manchester College have arranged for a series of meetings to be held in the College, extending over eight or nine days, for the purpose of discussing the many aspects of Sunday School work. How to teach! How to use the Bible! How to organise a school! How to make lessons interesting! School libraries, school music, school prizes! Lesson preparation!—these and kindred subjects are to be considered. The appeal is made to Sunday School teachers to do as the University Extension Students do, give up a week to quiet work in Oxford, varying the more serious occupation with excursions and sight-seeing. Lectures will be given by Dr. Drummond, Professors Carpenter, Odgers, and Upton, the Revs. J. Wright and J. Wood, Miss Drummond, and other friends. Mr. W. J. Woods, B.A., of Manchester College, has been appointed local secretary, and will make the necessary arrangements for lodgings, which can be had in vacation at a very reasonable rate. We earnestly commend the project to our Sunday Schools. There is the expense, but it would be an admirable plan if each Sunday School agreed to defray the whole or part of the expenses of one of its teachers each year, thus enabling the poorest to profit by the scheme. A most delightful week may then be spent, and we are satisfied our schools will receive a healthy stimulus.

The *Spectator*, so long associated with the name of Richard Hutton, startled its readers a few weeks ago by declaring that there are thousands of Unitarians in the Church of England. It scarcely knew how they reconciled their position with conscience, but supposed that having come to the conclusion that as belief in doctrine is no longer necessary to salvation, acquiescence in false doctrine did not matter. To us it seems a most immoral conclusion. But it has just received a very forcible exposition in a little book by Canon Page Roberts, called "Conformity and Conscience," in which Unitarians and others are given reasons for remaining in the Church, notwithstanding the fact that the Church teaches much they cannot believe. Canon Page Roberts is the successor to Frederick Denison Maurice, in the ministry of Vere Street Chapel, London, and one of the leaders of the Broad Church party. His church is attended by a good many people of liberal opinions, Unitarians among them, who, it would seem, are now and then troubled by qualms of conscience on doctrinal matters. Mr. Roberts undertakes to ease their qualms, and to show that Conformity is better than Conscience, and that to bow in the House of Rimmon is far more laudable than dissent. With a great show of respect for Nonconformity, he is not quite so sweetly reasonable in his remarks as might be expected from one who sets out to conciliate. Do you find it difficult to join in the morning and evening prayers of the Church? Of course you do if you are filled with "Acrid Egotism!" "If you cannot ignore little blemishes, overlook little offences, put up with some things you do not prefer, and allow to other people parts or forms of the services for which you do not care, then you had better set up a private oratory, furnish it with a looking-glass, and worship yourself." Does that mean

that the Unitarian who leaves the Church of England only does so to worship himself?

Whatever your opinions you are not justified in leaving the Church. Why be so pragmatical, dense, stiff, and childish? What does it matter if there is a good deal in the Creeds you cannot accept? "*There are no spies authorised to report whether you recite every article of the Creed without exception. No theological inquisition can demand of you in what sense you use its various articles, or why you are silent when some are proclaimed.*" What subtle Jesuitry is this? Since there are no spies you may be as intellectually dishonest as you please. You may use words in a double sense. You may be silent when things are proclaimed you hold to be false. Since theological inquisition is impossible why let conscience trouble you?

Is it not time we renewed our plea for a little intellectual honesty in religious matters?

A curious commentary on all this has been supplied by Canon Robinson, the new vicar of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the apology he made on Easter Sunday last, for re-introducing the Athanasian Creed. It appears that under Dean Farrar and Canon Eyton the recitation of that "document of damnation" was omitted—much to the relief of an intelligent congregation. But the new vicar, a High Churchman, made a declaration on the subject which was really extremely funny. He said that as loyal Churchmen it was specially important for them at this time of crisis to obey to the letter the rubric by which they were governed in this matter. He told the congregation, however, that the Athanasian Creed, commonly so-called, was not written by St. Athanasius, and that it is not a creed. "It is a hymn composed in the fifth century in Southern France as the triumph song of the Church over Arianism. It belongs to a stern and somewhat barbarous age, and we must in our minds exercise what is called the historic imagination if we are to interpret it in our own day. . . . We may historically sing this great hymn of the Christian Church without pledging ourselves to the literal meaning of every phrase. There are portions of it which our Christian Church would not endorse in the present day. These portions we shall sing as being part of the ancient hymn." That is at once ludicrous and farcical! If you sing it, "perish everlastingly" does not mean perish everlastingly. To say "I believe," no doubt commits you; to sing "I believe," is non-committal! There is no need to argue against a creed; only sing it and its precise and minute statements are no longer to be taken as truth but as aspects of the "historic imagination." Set to a Gregorian tone the declaration that "Before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholic Faith," becomes a harmless statement which the most benighted Unitarian can accept. Truly there is great virtue in music! Say a thing and it means black; sing it and it means white. What a topsy-turvy world we live in at Church, my masters!

Patience.

There can be no patience without quick and warm feeling. The dull phlegmatic man has sometimes ascribed to him the virtue of patience. It is a mistake. For patience is not simply bearing with quietness; it is bearing with quietness what is keenly felt. You would not call a stone patient let it bear what it might, and why? Because it feels nothing. It is not patience to be composed under what another would feel acutely if the reason is that you do not feel at all. It is not patience to await the decision of some question which would make another tremble with eagerness if the reason of your quietness be that you do not care how the matter goes. The old stoicism which had schooled itself to care for nothing, to love nothing, to feel nothing, was not patience. Paul, the quick, the sensitive, the passionate, the fusile apostle, knew what patience was and how hardly it is won when he said, "tribulation worketh patience." The calm, passionless nature which is never deeply moved either to enthusiasm or indignation, is by no means a pattern of patience. It is in men of a delicate, nervous organisation and an active brain that patience is most beautiful. There is *power* in the patience of such men. It means a victory gained over their natural disposition. Patience, true patience, always implies a certain strength of character.

The Life Song.

They knelt together, hand in hand,
The children at their mother's knee,
Her prayer they scarce could understand:
"Oh, Father, keep my darlings' faith
Still in Humanity—and Thee."

The years rolled on; in love, and truth
They gave their homage, pure and free,
In all the fervour of their youth:
"Our Father, give us stronger faith
In great Humanity—and Thee.

They watched the seething of the throng,
The beating of life's troubled sea,
And, mid the city's pain and wrong,
Half-wailed, "Oh, Father, give us faith
In poor Humanity—and Thee."

They worshipped heroes, and they fell;
Found faulty those most fair to see,
Whom, scorning, yet they loved too well,
While crying, "Father, grant us faith
In weak Humanity—and Thee."

And old age claimed them for its own.
Grown stronger now the youthful plea.
A hymn again, no more a moan,
"Oh, loving Father, keep our faith
In young Humanity—and Thee."

And now beside them silent stand
God's white-veiled angels—sickness—death.
And, passing to an unknown land,
They cry, "Oh, Father, keep us true
To dear Humanity—and Thee."

C. M. Brown.

Pictures of the Imagination.

There is, and there always must be, a great difference between "that which is" and "that which seems"—between the real and the ideal; and if this fact were more generally borne in mind, much disappointment would be prevented. In youth, pictures of the imagination are, as a rule, very vivid and glowing, and the anguish on discovering that "things are not what they seem" is correspondingly great. Pecksniff confessed that in the days of childhood he thought "pickled onions grew on trees, and that every elephant was born with an impregnable castle on his back." Is it unreasonable to say that many of the ideas of youth are not less absurd? Take, for example, the average youth's imaginary picture of the "splendid" life of a sailor. Nowadays, as we all know, comparatively few lads run away to sea—they prefer, even at a very early age, to dabble in literature and to speculate on the brilliant future of the "literary calling;" but at one time—owing principally to the great popularity of Marryat's novels—this was quite common, and lads very soon discovered that the life of a sailor is by no means so full of romance as their fancy painted.

Although everybody has had experiences of this sort, yet we continue to build those castles, and to paint those vivid mental pictures, for the simple reason that it is perfectly natural to do so. In like manner, everybody is addicted to drawing imaginary portraits—of picturing how such and such a man must look, in spite of an experience which tells us that those pictures will in all probability be totally unlike the original. It ought to be known by this time that the character or the personal appearance of an author cannot be judged from his writings, any more than the subject of those writings affords any clue to the circumstances under which they were written. Hogarth's poet indited an ode to riches while his wife was being dunned for the milk-score; and it is tolerably well known that Moore wrote *Lalla Rookh* in a cottage blocked up with snow, with an English winter howling around. After this, it is not surprising to learn that Tennyson has written to an admirer of his well-known poem, commencing, "Break, break, break, on thy cold grey stones, O Sea," saying that it was composed, not by the seashore, but "made in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning." Therefore, the old piece of advice, "Never read the life of your literary hero," is as full of significance now as ever it was; and it is because this injunction has been disregarded that so many pictures of the imagination in connection with literary men have been destroyed. An author may indeed say of his "literary executor"—as some one said of Lord Campbell—that he adds a new terror to death.

An American author, when a youth, was inexpressibly grieved to hear that the poet of whom he was then fond kept his hair very short, and wore the best fitting coat in New York. Popular imagination is apt to associate genius with an abundance of flowing locks and uncomfortable-looking cloaks; and it is doubtless owing to this reason that portraits of Tennyson

never fail to give satisfaction. But, as a rule, photographs of eminent men are very disappointing—why, it would sometimes be difficult to say. Can it be, as some one has suggested, that all the bright, clever, handsome, and "promising young men" never come to anything? Ladies are especially fond of drawing imaginary portraits of authors, actors, well-known divines, and professional beauties; and when they first see a photograph of any well-known personage, it is usually favoured with some honest though not flattering criticism. In the case of most other photographs, there is a surprising similarity of result, especially in the case of those of humorous writers and artists. It is naturally expected that there will be an air of jollity about such men; but most of them look as if they did not enjoy life, and even in the flesh many of them looked miserable.

Leech, according to an author who knew him, "disappointed expectation in the way of comedy. He was very silent, and his air was generally one of settled gloom." Artemus Ward always seemed unhappy; and Josh Billings, in the characteristic words of an American reporter, had the air of a man who had just seated himself on a tack. The living American humorists are equally disappointing. Mark Twain has been described as "wearing the injured look of a bad boy who has been pulled out of bed to see uncongenial company." If the personal appearance of such men as these fails to realise expectation, it is no wonder that their photographs are disappointing.

Of late years the practice of giving "portraits" of eminent men in newspapers has enormously increased, until one can hardly pick up a copy of any provincial journal without seeing one or two specimens of this kind of illustration. Unfortunately, however, the problem of reproducing photographs to work on certain kinds of fast printing machines has not yet been satisfactorily solved; and, consequently, many well-known men have been anything but flattered by some of these crude attempts at illustration. Not long ago a popular dramatist humorously threatened to bring an action for libel against a newspaper which had printed what he called a "beastly caricature" of himself. Mr. John Augustus O'Shea, too, once remarked of a certain newspaper "portrait" of himself that the "likeness in a fog" might save him from arrest if "wanted," but there was a risk of his American agent billing him as a "coloured gemman!" And now an American authoress has implored all her acquaintances who value their reputation to refuse to lend a photograph for the purpose of newspaper illustration. After making due allowance for exaggeration, there can be no doubt that many newspaper portraits are decidedly bad, and that they do much to destroy imaginary portraits and to create false impressions.

Places, like men, are frequently very different from the imaginary pictures formed of them. A great man confessed that he was "disappointed in the Atlantic." It was, he said, not nearly so grand as he had expected. If we are not mistaken, a popular journalist once expressed his indignation at the amount of "gush" that had been written about the grandeur of Niagara. Almost every traveller, indeed, records that he was disappointed in the appearance of certain of the well-known places in the world, because they were so different from what he had expected. Who has not experienced this feeling with regard to the sights in our own land? It is a singular fact, too, that the scenes of our youth, when visited after an absence of ten or twenty years, are generally disappointing, and invariably very different from the mental pictures we retain of them, even if no alterations have been made. Streets seem shorter, fields smaller, walls turn out to be much lower than we had supposed, and, in short, everything we see strikes us as being on a more insignificant scale now than when we were young. This can be easily accounted for, owing to the fact that the mental pictures formed in our childhood—when a five-foot wall, say, would appear rather high—have not become larger as we grow older. At thirty, a five-foot wall, as a rule, appears comparatively low; hence the disparity between the mental pictures and the evidence of our senses.

If one speaks evil of you, let your life be such that no one will believe him.

Dost thou think that merit consists in enjoying? No, but rather in working, in suffering, and in loving. He is most beloved of our Father on whom He lays the heaviest crosses, if these sufferings are accepted and borne with love.

From the Under-World.

Only a few days ago, and the Old Priory Garden was wrapped in its snowy mantle; the trees were bare and black, or covered with hoar-frost; the earth hard and ice-bound; the half-hardy herbage crumpled up and brown, or hanging limp and dejected-looking on their shrivelled stalks; even the holly and ivy had lost their crisp glossy freshness; and the yew drooped sadly in the biting hail and cutting east wind, rendered all the more insidious by an hour or two of brilliant sunshine in the middle of the day, that would melt the frost and snow off the turf in patches, to be all the more easily a prey to the bitter wind, and rendered sapless and lifeless.

Round every corner comes this Eastern fiend, lifting up every dry leaf, and penetrating to the inmost recesses of the tender under-shoots. Nothing is safe from its fierce treachery. Here, it strikes down the hale middle-aged man with an acute attack of pleurisy; there, a happy, well-cared-for child is barely pulled through the sudden sharp touch of croup; and scores of the 'uncared-for' atoms of humanity are not pulled through, but are choked out of existence without help.

Now, an aged individual creeps out of doors into the pleasant sunlight. As long as he keeps in the shelter of the south wall, he is fairly safe; but an old acquaintance greets him, and in a fatal moment he turns the corner of the wall, perhaps stands two minutes talking. Suddenly, a slight shiver seizes him and thrills through his frame; he retreats hastily homewards. "Too late." And his friend passes onward with an undefined foreboding that the man is going to be ill; little thinking that, in the idle moments of friendly gossip, the east wind has chilled the lifeblood, and checked the already too languid circulation in the aged veins. Job says: "The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth;" and again in Hosea: "The east wind increaseth desolation;" and over there in "God's-acre" are newly-made graves, that have been filled by the cruel ravages of this unrelenting monarch, over whose occupants might be fitly written the above epitaphs. When gentle Charles Kingsley wrote his ode to the *Bluff North-easter*, did he think the "wind of God" would be his own death-warrant? But so it was: the disease that carried this gentle, loving soul to his grave was intensified and aggravated by the baleful effects of a sudden chill.

But at last—at last this arch-enemy has departed; and though a chill rawness is in the air, still there is a strange subtile difference to the senses. Waking up in the very earliest dawning, your ears are saluted with the musical trickling of water down the spouting, the soft fall of rain on the roof, and sudden little wet dashes against the window. The wind has a low hollow murmur in the distant elms, and swirls round in fitful gushes, that have a gentler cadence. As you lie still and listen gladly to these welcome sounds, you are conscious of breathing easier and taking deeper respirations before dropping off into a more restful and life-giving sleep. Strangely enough, you sleep an hour later than usual. But to what a different world you wake up! After another twenty-four hours' rain, and you go out of doors in the wet glistening morning, what do you find? That a thrush is singing its sweet shrill melody from the top of an apple-tree, whose bare and apparently lifeless branches have already felt the quickening thrill of the rising sap; and looking closely, you find tiny points of vivid crimson in every twist and turn of the boughs. The brown sheaths of the pear have opened, revealing the tender white cone of the coming blossom. The hardier fruit-trees have made best use of the time, and are sprouting rapidly. You feel a puff of the south wind; and along the old wall, from the 'dark under-world,' have appeared the pale snowdrop; and in another corner, half-a-dozen golden gems of the winter aconite peep out cheerfully. The daisies have not yet dared to lift their ruffled faces; but the turf has a brighter appearance, and a sweet keen smell that is simply delicious. Whence comes this vivifying principle? From the black earth, causing all nature to shine forth at a breath of the south wind, that rives even the zone of the winter king.

He who holds the world in the hollow of His hand has seen fit for some of His children to "go over to the majority;" but in the returning beauty and freshness and joyousness of nature we can also discern "the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us."

A Letter.

And so, my child, your heart is almost weary,
And life has nothing that is fair to you?
Because, you say, with exclamation dreary,
"There is so little that a girl can do!"

And yet, I think, that somewhere in your city
Many there are who need a helping hand;
Or, at the least, some word of love and pity,
That they will prize, and subtly understand.

Be not cast down because of earthly treasure:
Little you have in silver and in gold:
These, too, are good; but God hath greater pleasure
In the heart's riches, which are manifold.

Do what you can, and let the Lord's increasing
Make of it more until the harvest come;
And, meanwhile, strive and labour without ceasing,
Hearing Christ's voice above the city's hum.

Never a day within the crowded city,
Never an hour from morning until eve,
But that His Voice is heard to plead for pity,
But that His Heart is known to plain and grieve.

Go, then. But if your heart is sad and broken,
And to be helpless is your heaven-sent fate,
Take comfort, and remember, 'tis well spoken
That they, too, serve who only stand and wait!

J. S. FLETCHER.

Children's Questions.

Every one asks questions. Questions, like answers, are cues to character. Questions have displayed the greatest wit and stupidity, wisdom and folly, learning and ignorance, modesty and impudence. There is no form of speech more utterly confounding, or more liable to give deep offence. Probably none of the questions raised by wit or philosophy ever caused more helpless perplexity than those by which fathers and mothers are hourly besieged, when their children's young ideas begin to shoot.

The inquisitiveness of these miniature philosophers is generally regarded as one of the provoking, yet irresistible, prettinesses of childhood, and, unfortunately, it is not simply admired as a mere prettiness, but is treated as such.

Parents apparently, if not actually, ignore the fact that this ceaseless flow of inquiry is one of the means by which the moral and intellectual character of their children is to be formed. It is sad to observe what miserably shuffling replies are often given to questions worthy of careful answers, whilst, in other cases, the most foolish and cruel of all expedients is resorted to by saying, "Children should not ask questions." Truly, parents consult expediency, rather than prudence, and "the line of least resistance" seems to be the law of morals as well as of mechanics.

Unimportant as these rebuffs and evasions may appear, they are nevertheless a fruitful source of filial contempt, deceit, and precociousness. It may be objected that it is quite impossible, and, if possible, not proper, to answer the numberless queries with which children confront their elders. Surely it would be treating children as innocent, rational beings to tell them frankly, when they ask improper questions, that they shall know when they are old enough. It is unkind of anyone, through lack of time, to hurt a child's mind by a harsh rebuke when eagerly questioning; we should, rather, promise attention at the earliest leisure moment, and strictly fulfil the promise.

Parents would not lose an iota of filial respect, rather the reserve, by promptly confessing ignorance when questions exceed their knowledge. It may be painful to do so, but anything is better than to tell a child a falsehood. If possible, search for the information at once, letting the child see your patient investigation, for children are imitators, and soon learn to copy, with a certain amount of pride, the actions of their elders.

The system of mutual discipline may be very troublesome, but what is the result of following the path of indolence and convenience?

It is impossible to evade the fact that even children can penetrate the daily shallowness of parents, and become deceitful through taking improper means of obtaining knowledge, for children intuitively feel knowledge to be a birthright.

All education resolves itself into this: The whole life of a single human being is a severely just answer to the question—What were the parents?

"There stands before you
The youth and golden top of your existence—
Another life of yours."

A. A. G.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

I Love You.

I love you, little babbling brook,
For ever flowing full and free,
Past speedwell blue and willow tree,
By mossy bank and shady nook.

I love you, little stars of light,
God's lanterns shining in the sky,
To watch me as at rest I lie
In peaceful slumbers through the night.

I love you, lilies tall and fair,
That grow within the garden old,
Your pearly petals, streaked with gold,
With fragrance fill the summer air.

I love you, little skylark brown,
With quivering throat and outstretched wing,
Into the blue you soar and sing,
Then to your nest drop gently down.

I love you, brooklet, glad and free,
And twinkling star, and bird and flower,
And loving you, I love the Power
That guards and blesses you and me.

MABEL GAGE PARSONS.

A Story of Two Sparrows.

"What a hum-drum fellow you are!" said a pert sparrow to his little brown brother as they sat with the rest of their family on the stone coping of a large house, waiting for the sun to rise. "Have you no aspirations?" he went on, edging a little nearer, and peering into his brother's face; "I don't believe you ever want to be anything but a sparrow."

"I don't understand what aspirations mean," answered the hum-drum sparrow, and I am not sure that I care, either; you interrupt me, brother: look, the clouds begin to redden for the sunrise!" and he put in his little chirp to join the chorus, which was beginning all over the land.

The pert sparrow hopped away down to the gutter, and sat by himself at its corner with his back to the rising sun, feeling very cross and disagreeable.

Down on the lawn below he noticed a troop of starlings scurrying to and fro in greedy haste for breakfast. An idea struck him: "Perhaps," he thought, "after all I am not a sparrow! Perhaps I am a *starling!*" and he flew down from his roof corner among them.

"Good morning, Master Sparrow!" said the starlings, which are a polite race of birds.

"You mistake!" answered the pert sparrow, swelling himself out big; "I am a starling."

The starlings gathered round in mirth and wonder to see this sparrow who called himself a starling. "*You* a starling!" they screamed in derision; "*you* can't eat worms! *you* can't even waddle! C-r-r-r-e-e-e-e!!" (which is the starling way of laughing).

The pert sparrow was so much offended that he betook himself to the top of the nearest elm to think things over. Was he right or were the starlings? He, a bird with such great thoughts, was just as likely to be right as they. And so, reasoning to himself, he caught sight of a flight of rooks just setting out from the rookery in the valley for a freshly-ploughed field at some distance, where news had been blown abroad through Rookland that the worms were unusually fat and fine. As the goodly company of black-coated birds swept across his vision the sparrow was struck by a new and brilliant fancy. "I must be a crow!" he cried, and he flew up to join the solemn throng.

Be sure his presence did not much affect them, for their minds were set on the great business of daily food; only the bird nearest the sparrow noticed him, and remarked to one of its companions, "Where did this atom come from? Can you tell me what it is?"

"A sparrow, I believe," answered his friend; "C-r-r-a-w-w!" (which is the rook way of laughing).

The poor little sparrow was very tired before they reached their destination, and swooped down to its rugged furrows with a grand rush of sombre wings. To and fro over the clods of earth they paced with croaks and cawings, and left the pert sparrow sitting by himself on a stone out of breath no less than out of spirits. Being a rook was not such fun as he had imagined. Perhaps the thing that tried him most was that the rooks took no manner of notice of him, being occupied with the more important diversion of a meal.

Just then a bird with slender wings, barred breast, and fierce expectant eyes, swept over the nearest clump of trees and hung suspended in the blue air above the field.

His head turned from side to side; his wonderful eyes went every way; his wings quivered slightly; breakfast was also in his mind.

The sparrow crouched a little, dumb with awe and admiration. How wonderful was this bird who could rest on the air as if upheld by unseen hands, or go up its windy highroads into the kingdoms of the sun; whose energy was as the storm, whose grace and speed were as the lightning.

"I will be a falcon!" cried the pert sparrow: "I will hover too;" and he sprang up with a twitter to join the bird of prey. Poor little pert sparrow! That was his last remark. A shadow sudden and swift as fate came between him and the sun. He was struck by the crooked beak, dropped and caught in the powerful claws, and borne away to serve that sparrow-hawk for an excellent breakfast.

Meanwhile the hum-drum sparrow sat in the gutter with the sunshine on his breast, vigorously chirping his appreciation of the delicious morning.

The air glowed with light, the wind was gay among the dancing leaves, and it *may* have been my fancy, but I thought the sun shone with a tenderer brightness, and the wind blew with a more delicious freshness, for the sake of that chirping sparrow.

MAY CUNNINGTON.

Blowing Bubbles.

Bubbles burst? Ah! well, never cry,
We'll bear it bravely—you and I.
To older folks such things befall,
Bubbles will burst for one and all.

A beauty was it, my little maid,
In jasper, emerald, and gold array'd!
You toss'd it lightly in the air—
It burst, and lo! what had you there?

Only soap-suds—ah! well-a-day,
Yours was but pastime, only play;
Other bubbles you'll blow to-morrow,
Then I'd not cry in so much sorrow.

List, wee maiden, listen to me,
I'll whisper thee of the days to be;
Bubbles in life will burst and go,
Beautiful things, and rare, you know.

But only bubbles, just to burst,
Bubbles belov'd, and that's the worst—
Pleasure's bubbles, bubbles of fame,
Of this, and that, but all the same.

Roseate tinted, beauty fraught,
Only soap-suds, things of naught;
Then, child, you'll learn to grasp the true:
A lesson this for me and for you.

Be of Good Cheer.

The sea recedes, leaving depression, blackness, and waste far out from the shore. Is nature beating a retreat? Ere long the tide, full, sparkling and bright, comes breasting it back, arm in arm with earth and sun. The tide goes out that it may get ready to return, laden with what had not before arrived in the offing. There is no final ebb to soul or sea. Great preparations are made through ebbs and failures.

The poor man's garden may be very small—horizontally. But never mind. It is extremely large in its extension upward, reaching the region of dews, rain-clouds, then, still higher, the lofty and enormous source of light and heat. The foundations of his little estate, everlasting and safe, go down to the centre of the globe. Every soul, however humble and hemmed in, is in relation with the divinest centralities, the grandest immensities.

The world of evil is a coward before its masters. Ills are furtive and flee from the presence of accredited healers. When they have aroused our sense of power and noblest manhood, they have no more business here, and they slink away. Ghosts and such as they hie them away at sight of the dawning light. Why does a certain woman sing when in trouble, but that singing is a good thing to put troubles out of countenance? How much better with aspiration and holy endeavour to make a melodious psalm out of the willing air of the room rather than fill it with sighs! The boy whistles to keep his courage up, because the musical current from his lips tends to flood and drown his fears. "Be of good cheer."—W. M. Bicknell.

It is impossible to walk across so much as a road of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense as of a dew falling on you out of the sky.—*Samuel Johnson.*

Would to God that we could idealise our lives more; fill the common round, the daily task with poetry; see through the ugly to the beautiful; see through the common to the heavenly; see amidst the fleshly the immortal; see always the good and strong growing from more to more. See the golden cords of love weaving their threads through each part and pulsing the whole in harmony to its happy music. Would to God we could live and feel it more and more, till the great mystery of the Universe becomes to us "very good."

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